

PUBLIKA

Aggregate of readers, viewers or listeners

Approaches to its study:

- structural (composition of the audience)
- behavioural (effects of media messages on individual behaviour)
- cultural (meanings of contents and processes of media use in social and cultural contexts)

A market approach to audiences

Dual significance of the audience:

1. potential consumers of a media product
 2. a product itself that is sold to advertisers
- for advertisers particular segments of the audience are most attractive – age, gender and income

Research on Audiences

Secondary data:

Ratings (% of population that listened/viewed programme) and reach (net number or percentage of people who have seen a particular piece of broadcast output)

Circulation and Readership – náklad a čtenost

<http://www.abccr.cz/overovana-data/periodicky-tisk-1/?filterYear=2011&filterMonth=2¬Verified=1>

Academic research on audiences

- Effects – hypodermic needle
- Uses and gratifications: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, surveillance (polysemy – Stuart Hall encoding/decoding)
- Social uses of media – Lull – communication facilitation, avoidance, social learning, competence
- Ethnography: identity, everyday life, reception

Academic research

- active audience since the 1980s
- a shift away from what media do to people and to what people do with media
 - David Morley: Nationwide Audience – key study that tested Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model
- reception of texts – ideology, pleasure, in more recent years a widening of agenda – reception of media texts within a variety of contexts, socio-cultural, ethnic groups and also the use of media within the context of everyday life

Readings

Morley: Changing paradigms in audience studies
- a key overview of developments

Primary data collection

- Quantitative (positivist) vs. qualitative (constructivist, critical theory) options
- Generalisability vs. transferability:
- Can you generalize from your examples to a wider group of people? Vs. Are you trying to understand individual cases – considering examples from defined groups or looking at instances of a process?

Sampling and populations

- Sampling:
 - in positivist parlance – selecting a smaller group that represents a larger one
 - more loosely understood it describes any process of selecting subjects for study incl. cases and instances without the aim of generalizing

Selecting and Sampling

- Samples taken from populations – these are not necessarily people, can be aggregates of texts, institutions or anything under investigation
- A population is defined by research objectives; it has two important functions: 1. helps decide an adequate and appropriate sampling strategy and 2. it signals how broadly the findings can be extrapolated

Sample size

- Depends on research objectives, research design, research question
- Is big always beautiful?
- Challenged by qualitative studies – these are less concerned with *extensive* perspective (generalizable) than with providing *intensive* insights; samples seen as *illustrative* rather than strictly *representative*.

Asking questions

- From highly structured and standardized to highly non-structured and non-standardized
- Structured questioning – minimize the influence of human factors on data-gathering
- Non-structured – stress on interactive dialogue with interviewees that conforms to the normal conventions of conversation

Question delivery – from highly structured to non-structured

- Printed self-completion questionnaires
- Online self-completion questionnaires
- Standardized face-to-face interviews
- Standardized telephone interviews
- Online semi-structured interviews in a free format
- Online focus group interviews
- Semi-structured face-to-face/telephone interviews in a free format
- Face-to-face focus group interviews
- Non-directive face-to-face interviews in a free format

Standardised face-to-face interviews

- Less structured than offline and online self-completion questionnaires because interviewers are involved
- Control interviewer bias – protocols to govern all aspects of the interview process: interview schedule, prompts and standardized conduct in pre-interview period

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews in a free format

- Not concerned with standardization and control, aim to promote an active, open-ended dialogue with interviewees
- 'conversations with a purpose' (Lindlof) – the interviewer retains control of the terms of the discussion, refers to the interview guide

Non-directive face-to-face interviewing in a free format

- The interviewee directs the form and direction of the exchange – following train of thoughts
- Free-association interviewing not widely employed in social research

Strengths and weaknesses

- CONVENIENCE
- COMPREHENSION
- RAPPORT AND RESPONSE
- DEPTH
- CONTROL AND COMPARISON
- ELABORATION AND DIGRESSION

Types of questions

- Behaviour – what people do
- Beliefs – what people believe to be the case
- Attitudes – what people would prefer to be the case
- Attributes – background info about the respondent's characteristics

Types of questions – cont.

- Closed questions – limit possible responses:
 1. Limited choice (Yes/No)
 2. Multiple choice (a. b. c.)
 3. Checklist questions
 4. Partially closed (a set of responses that includes other and space for elaborating on it)
 5. Attitudinal questions (a scale on which the respondent indicates level of agreement/disagreement with a statement)

Types of questions – cont.

- Open questions – respondents answer in their own words:
 1. Opener questions
 2. Follow-up questions
 3. Suggestions questions
 4. Argument questions
 5. Reasons why questions
 6. Opinions/values questions
 7. Feeling/behaviour questions

Observation

- A range of research methods that allow direct access to the social behaviour being analyzed
 - Types of observational methods
 1. Simple observation – ‘fly on the wall’
 2. Participant observation – the researcher is taking part – to some extent – in the activities of the people being observed
 3. Ethnography – any qualitative research involving extended observation over a period of time
- Note: structured experimental observation – in laboratory, e.g. on effects of violence in media